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Zoning Board of Appeals
Walpole, MA

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to you tonight as a resident of South Walpole in regard to the Omni Development's 40b proposal for the Cedar Edge/Cedar Crossing development of 300 new units of housing at 55 Summer Street in South Walpole. You have received multiple letters from me by now, but this particular letter will focus solely on the issues regarding traffic after listening to the ZBA hearing from 7-9pm this evening. If there was just one single reason to either deny this project from moving forward, or to at the very least decrease its capacity exponentially, the negative impact of traffic would be it.

The first issue I will address is that when the traffic studies were performed last fall, they were during incorrect peak times for our community. Boyden Elementary School begins at 8:25am, with the first bell ringing at 8:15am, and school closing at 2:55pm. Currently, the line to pick up children for 2:55pm begins at the front door of Boyden and ends all the way down the street and around the corner spilling onto Water Street. Traffic from both directions on Washington Street are constantly backed up as cars try to enter and exit the school parking lots for pick-up. Omni's traffic reviewer, Ken, stated that there are about 600 residents who could walk to Boyden but choose not to and that his study only recorded seven people walking towards the school in the morning. First of all, most people don't want to have their children walk to Boyden because *it is unsafe* due to the current traffic issues at the popular "triangle" intersection, as well as the fact that there are not consistent sidewalks on all of the streets. So, Ken actually proved our first point that it is already *not* safe for young children to walk our streets to school.

Second, the applicant David Hale repeatedly stated that he is not responsible for the impact his project will have on the triangle intersection. When David Hale builds a 57-acre development with 192 apartments, 52 townhomes and 56 houses, he is absolutely responsible for the negative impact it will have on all the high-traffic areas in close proximity to the build out. He is the one providing the hundreds of new pedestrians and vehicles a home that will directly cause extreme congestion to very narrow, unsafe and confusing roadways just outside of the complex.

It was also stated by Mr. Hale that he is not responsible for Gillette Stadium traffic. I must remind the Board that we are not talking about just eight home games for the Patriots in a season. We are talking about all of the weekly Rev games, concerts, special events, box office blowouts, Black Friday, holiday shopping, etc. that cause major traffic spilling into our neighborhoods. On top of this traffic, add inclement weather and it's a complete nightmare. I live on Washington Street Extension, which is a dead end. I will tell you as a fact, it has taken me over an hour in the past to creep down Washington Street or come home from Route 1 just before or right after an event when it would typically take me five minutes. Pre-COVID, my family quickly learned to schedule our outings around the Stadium events when possible. I ask you, what will travel to and from my home look like when adding literally hundreds of vehicles and pedestrians?

As I mentioned above, the Omni traffic reviewer stated that not many pedestrians were recorded during the studies. One reason, as stated above, is that the streets are not conducive to pedestrians. I walk my puppy daily on these streets and have to take the same route each day because there are streets without sidewalks or I fear that even though I use the crosswalks, the streets are not safe enough to walk across on a regular basis due to distracted drivers. During Stadium events, the number of pedestrians greatly increases, and traffic is backed up in all areas. Also, when adding 300 housing units to the area, the number of pedestrians will obviously greatly increase, again adding more chaos to our streets.

I have raised the concern in past letters that the Kraft Line has added much stress on our neighborhoods and the close proximity to the only egress of the development will absolutely back traffic onto all side roads. I understand that the train has now been paused, but COVID-19 will not last forever, and the train will run again. It was stated in the hearing tonight that there is a possibility that drivers will swerve in an unsafe path to avoid the train traffic and that a speed of more than 5 mph would be very dangerous exiting the development. It is inevitable that accidents will happen in this particular area due to these concerns.

The Peer Reviewers spoke specifically about the triangle intersection and how this development will push the capacity of the intersection, spilling vehicle cues all the way back towards Route 1. I may not understand all of the language that was used to

interpret and predict just how the hundreds of vehicles will overflow the triangle intersection, but I do understand complete chaos. If the predictions are correct, I will be stuck both entering and exiting my dead-end street just to leave and come home each day. I fear for the safety of my family if we are ever stuck in an emergency and can't get in or out of our street when needed, which is a valid concern with the projected excess traffic.

I heard multiple times tonight that the applicant was not proactive, did not provide mitigation to Peer Reviewer concerns and that no responsibility or accountability was taken for the impact this development will cause on the high-traffic areas. It is now obvious that there is a great lack of communication and no cohesiveness in working as a team to ensure the safety of the current and incoming residents to our South Walpole community. I ask that you please take all of these valid concerns into consideration when making your decision about this proposed development. It will directly impact my family, my neighbors and our loving community in a way that will change how we live and the reasons why we chose to live here.

If there's anything we've learned from the world today, it is that our voice counts. You, the ZBA, are our vote.

As always, I thank you for your time and dedication to our town.

Sincerely,

Becky Litvak

Becky Litvak
South Walpole Resident